# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

KALOMA CARDWELL,

Plaintiff,

v.

DAVIS POLK & WARDWELL LLP, THOMAS REID, JOHN BICK, HAROLD BIRNBAUM, DANIEL BRASS, and BRIAN WOLFE,

Defendants.

19 Civ. 10256 (GHW)

### DEFENDANTS' MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF MOTION TO COMPEL PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS AND INTERROGATORY RESPONSES

PAUL, WEISS, RIFKIND, WHARTON & GARRISON LLP 1285 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10019–6064

Tel.: (212) 373–3000 Fax: (212) 757–3990

Attorneys for Defendants

Dated: November 18, 2020

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Pursuant to this Court's November 4, 2020 order, defendants respectfully submit this memorandum of law in support of their motion, under Rules 26 and 37 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, to compel responses to defendants' written discovery and for related relief. Nov. 4, 2020 Tr. at 36.

#### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

During the pre-motion conference with respect to this motion, counsel for plaintiff confirmed plaintiff's untenable positions with respect to his discovery obligations, including that he is allegedly not required to (1) produce materials in their native form or at least containing the metadata associated with the native form of the documents (e.g., plaintiff's counsel stated that defendants are not entitled to "sender, recipient, time, and date," because that information "does fall under a broader construction of metadata," Tr. at 31-32); (2) respond to defendants' interrogatories or requests for production ("RFPs") until defendants further narrow or clarify the language of their requests (e.g., plaintiff's counsel stated that defendants are not entitled to responses to certain interrogatories because "[t]he questions put forth by the defense did not adequately and precisely call for certain – did not adequately and precisely call for the production of those specific items," Tr. at 33); (3) specify whether he is or is not withholding responses or documents in his possession, custody or control on the basis of the general or specific objections he has asserted (plaintiff's counsel insisted that plaintiff's form objection was "not . . . a general blanket assertion," and that "for each question, we stated which objections we're withholding"); or (4) confirm that he had in fact made a reasonable search of communications platforms, like Signal, that he directed his contacts to use (e.g., plaintiff's counsel stated that defendants' request for a search of the Signal platform was based on "speculation that there should have been continuous chains of communications . . . ," Tr. at 34).

For the reasons discussed below, plaintiff's positions are without support. Consistent with the Court's permission, defendants accordingly move to compel (i) responses to their interrogatories; (ii) production of responsive materials in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control; and (iii) return of confidential material taken by plaintiff when he left the Firm.<sup>1</sup>

#### **ARGUMENT**

#### A. <u>Defendants Move To Compel Responses to Their Interrogatories</u>

Defendants move to compel responses to their interrogatories. Plaintiff's Second Supplemental Responses and Objections to Defendants' Interrogatories (ECF 85-8) violate Rule 33 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because they do not answer "fully" defendants' interrogatories. Fed. R. Civ. P. 33(b)(3).

The specific Interrogatories and the bases of defendants' motion are set forth in detail in the chart below.<sup>2</sup> To summarize the core deficiencies in the responses, plaintiff has repeatedly refused to specify whether his responses are or are not limited by the objections he has asserted and, if so, on what specific bases he is withholding information. In addition, with respect to several interrogatories, plaintiff has self-servingly deferred his obligation to respond by arguing, without basis, that the requests require clarification or narrowing, but has offered virtually no meaningful engagement as to the clarification or narrowing he seeks. Likewise, plaintiff has declined to provide information because he claims to want to understand how the information request relates to the claims or defenses in the case, where the requests plainly do, and despite the fact that defendants have made clear that they do through counsel in the meet and confer process.

The background facts relevant to each of the requests below are set forth in the respective argument sections and in further detail in the September 29, 2020 Joint Letter and Exhibits at ECF 85-1.

Although plaintiff's failure to comply with Rule 33's stricture that the "grounds for objecting to an interrogatory must be stated with specificity" merits a finding that he has "waived" the right to object, defendants are not asserting waiver at this time, but reserve all rights. Fed. R. Civ. P. 33(b)(4).

Rog	Summary	Plaintiff's	Defendants' Response
(see		Improper	
ECF 85-8)		Objections	
03-0)	Failura to Da	spond "Fully" to Inter	rragataries ar
		e Objections With Part	23
1, 2, 3,	Seek information	Declines to specify	Defendants move to compel
5, 6, 7,	relating to individuals	whether his	specific responses and objections
8, [9],	with knowledge of	responses are or are	that set forth, with specificity,
11, 13	plaintiff's alleged	not limited by the	whether plaintiff's responses are
	treatment, work, and	objections he has	limited by the objections he has
	staffing; alleged	asserted and, if so,	asserted and, if so, on what
	reputational, emotional,	on what specific	specific bases he is withholding
	and psychological	bases he is	information.
	harm; job searches and legal work; and	withholding information.	Defendants seek detail sufficient
	communications	information.	to enable them to determine the
	relating to the subject		need for additional motion
	matter of the litigation,		practice.
	and the email and		
	social media accounts		
	used by plaintiff in the		
_	relevant period.	D 10 11	
5	Seeks identity of	Purports to defer his	Defendants move to compel a
	persons with knowledge of alleged	obligation to respond to this	"full[]" response.
	"impairment to	interrogatory	Rog 5 indisputably relates to
	[plaintiff's] name and	pending a meet and	"matter[s] that may be inquired
	reputation."	confer focused on	into under Rule 26(b)," and is thus
	•	"clarify[ing]" or	proper under Rule 33. Fed. R.
		"narrow[ing]" the	Civ. P. 33(a)(2). This
		"scope" of the	interrogatory is "relevant" to the
		interrogatory, but he	"claim[s] or defense[s]" here—
		has offered virtually	plaintiff seeks recovery of alleged
		no meaningful	"reputational damage," ECF 95
		engagement as to the clarification or	(Second Amended Complaint) at 169—and thus is proper under
		narrowing he seeks.	Rule 26. Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(1).
		Defendants remain	1000 200 1000 100 0100 11 20(0)(1).
		without a	
		substantive	
		response. <sup>3</sup>	

Plaintiff's refusal to respond fully to defendants' interrogatories pending clarification or narrowing constitutes improper burden-shifting, particularly where the refusal was not followed by meaningful engagement. Plaintiff's "failures" are not "excus[able]" here, particularly because he failed, notwithstanding more than five hours of meet-and-confer calls, meaningfully to engage as to the clarification or narrowing he purported to seek, leaving

13	Asks plaintiff to	Purports to defer his	Defendants move to compel a
	identify the email and	obligation to	"full[]" response to Rog 13.
	social media accounts	respond to this	
	he used in the relevant	interrogatory	The accounts plaintiff used relate
	period.	pending a meet and	to matters that may be inquired
		confer to help him	into; in particular, defendants are
		"better understand	entitled to a response to enable
		how the request	them to understand whether
		relates to the claims	plaintiff made a reasonable search
		or defenses," but he	for information responsive to their
		has offered virtually	requests for production across the
		no meaningful	platforms he used in the relevant
		engagement as to	period.
		what he does not	
		understand.	
		Defendants remain	
		without a	
		substantive	
		response.	

# B. Defendants Move To Compel Production of Responsive Materials in Plaintiff's Possession, Custody, or Control

Defendants move to compel production of all responsive material in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control or, in the alternative, particularized responses and objections to their RFPs.

1. Plaintiff Must Produce Responsive Material In His Possession, Custody, or Control

Plaintiff's Second Supplemental Objections and Responses to Defendants' First Set of RFPs (ECF 85-7) violate Rule 34 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, as set forth in **Charts**1 through 4 below, because they fail to satisfy the particularity requirement. Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(b)(2)(C) ("an objection must state whether any responsive materials are being withheld on the basis of that objection"). Plaintiff's failure to state objections with particularity merits a finding

defendants without recourse except to the Court. Fed. R. Civ. P. 33(b)(4); *accord* Fed. R. Civ. P. 37(d)(2) ("a failure described in Rule 37(d)(1)(A) is not excused on the ground that the discovery sought was objectionable" where, as here, a party had no "pending motion for a protective order").

of waiver of objections, except as to privilege, here. *Fischer* v. *Forrest*, 2017 WL 773694, at \*1, \*3 (S.D.N.Y. Feb. 28, 2017) (Peck, J.) (holding that "any discovery response that does not comply with Rule 34's requirement to state objections with specificity (and to clearly indicate whether responsive material is being withheld on the basis of objection) will be deemed a waiver of all objections (except as to privilege)").<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, deficiencies in plaintiff's production, as set forth in **Chart 5** below, indicate that plaintiff has failed, as is his burden, to undertake a reasonable search for responsive, nonprivileged information in his possession, custody, or control.

Defendants therefore move to compel production of material responsive to the following RFPs. Plaintiff's relevant objections and defendants' responses are set forth below:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(b)(2)(C) advisory committee's note to 2015 amendment (goal of specificity requirement is to "end the confusion that frequently arises when a producing party states several objections and still produces information, leaving the requesting party uncertain whether any relevant and responsive information has been withheld on the basis of the objections").

RFP	Summary of RFP	Plaintiff's	Defendants' Response
(see	v	Improper	•
ECF		Objections	
85-7)		-	
		Issue 1:	
	Failure to Set Forth C	· ·	·
1–10,	Seek documents relating to	Responded to each	Defendants move to
13,	• plaintiff's "claim that	with the boilerplate	compel production of all
15-	defendants discriminated	"[f]or the	nonprivileged materials
22,	against [and] retaliated	avoidance of doubt,	in plaintiff's possession,
25,	against" him [RFP 1];	plaintiff is	custody, or control
26,	<ul> <li>allegedly similarly-situated</li> </ul>	withholding	responsive to RFPs 1–10,
28-31	Davis Polk ("DPW," or the	documents based	13, 15–22, 25, 26, and 28-
	"Firm") employees who were	on the objections	31.
	allegedly treated more	and descriptions	
	favorably [RFP 2];	noted herein."	Plaintiff's responses do
	<ul> <li>his employment at DPW</li> </ul>		not make clear what he
	[RFP 3];		has agreed to produce and
	<ul> <li>communications between</li> </ul>		what he has withheld,
	plaintiff and present or		notwithstanding the clear
	former agents or employees		requirements of Rule 34.
	of DPW [RFP 4];		As a result, defendants are
	• documents, including witness		unable, despite repeated
	statements, obtained in		attempts to seek
	connection with the litigation		clarification, to discern
	from non-parties [RFP 5];		the particularized bases on
	<ul> <li>calendars and hours worked</li> </ul>		which plaintiff is
	[RFP 6];		withholding responsive
	• his allegation that he is		information or to
	entitled to compensatory or		determine the scope of
	punitive damages [RFP 7];		withholding.
	• a leave of absence [RFP 8];		D1 : .:00 0 ::
	• plaintiff's non-DPW		Plaintiff's failure to
	employment [RFP 9];		comply with Rule 34
	• job searches [RFP 10];		merits a finding that he
	<ul> <li>plaintiff's community service</li> </ul>		has waived the right to
	and board/ association/		lodge objections other
	nonprofit/ volunteer positions		than on the basis of
	[RFP 13];		privilege and defendants
	2		move to compel
	any agency proceedings  concerning the subject matter		production of all
	concerning the subject matter of this litigation (including		nonprivileged responsive
			materials.
	briefs, materials relied upon, and communications with the		
	agency) [RFP 15–17];		

- documents obtained from DPW that remain in his custody [RFP 18];
- documents sent from plaintiff's DPW address to any non-DPW address accessible to or controlled by him [RFP 19];
- documents provided by DPW to plaintiff's counsel (including former counsel) [RFP 20];
- contracts and representation or retainer agreements between plaintiff and any attorneys in connection with this action [RFP 21];
- certified copies of plaintiff's college and law school transcripts [RFP 22];
- documents relied upon in preparing his initial disclosures [RFP 25];
- communications with individuals named in plaintiff's initial disclosures [RFP 26];
- individuals identified in plaintiff's R&Os to defendants' Interrogatories [RFP 28];
- documents "plaintiff may rely upon, introduce as evidence, or use in any other manner during the course of this litigation, including at any trial" [RFP 29];
- documents reviewed or relied upon in preparing the complaint and/or other documents relating to the subject matter of this litigation [RFP 30–31].

Issue 2:		
<b>Failure to Produce Responsive Materials</b>		
Absent "Better Understanding"		

### 8, 9, 20, 21, 22

Seek documents relating to

- plaintiff's leave of absence from DPW in 2017 [RFP 8];
- plaintiff's employment history since separating from DPW [RFP 9];
- documents provided by DPW to plaintiff's counsel (including former counsel) [RFP 20];
- contracts and representation or retainer agreements between plaintiff and any attorneys in connection with this action [RFP 21];
- certified copies of plaintiff's college and law school transcripts [RFP 22].

Purports to defer his obligation to produce materials in response to these RFPs on the grounds that he needed to "better understand" how requests relating to these topics "relate[] to the claims and defenses in this action," but he has offered virtually no meaningful engagement, over more than five hours of meet and confer calls, as to the clarification or narrowing he seeks. Defendants remain without responsive materials.

Defendants move to compel production of all nonprivileged materials in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control responsive to RFPs 8, 9, 20, 21, and 22.

RFPs 8, 9, 20, 21, and 22 indisputably relate to "matter[s] that may be inquired into under Rule 26(b)," and are thus proper under Rule 34. Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(a).

These requests are "relevant" to the "claim[s] or defense[s]" here—plaintiff contends that his hours fell as a result of actions by defendants, including during the period in which he was on leave; contends that he "continues to suffer harm and substantial economic loss" as a result of acts of defendants; claims privilege over certain materials; claims that certain materials were not made available to him; and makes claims with respect to his credentials and training. These subjects are properly the subject of requests for production under Rules 34 and 26. Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(a), 26(b)(1).

Issue 3:
Failure to Produce Responsive Materials Absent "Narrowing"

- 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 19, 26, 28, 31
- Seek documents relating to
   communications between plaintiff and present or former agents or employees of DPW [RFP 4];
- documents, including witness statements, obtained in connection with the litigation from non-parties [RFP 5]
- plaintiff's job searches [RFP 10];
- plaintiff's community service and board/ association/ nonprofit/ volunteer positions [RFP 13];
- litigation or administrative proceedings to which plaintiff is or has been a party between 2005 (when plaintiff entered college) and today [RFP 14];
- documents sent from plaintiff's DPW address to any non-DPW address accessible to or controlled by him [RFP 19];
- communications with individuals named in plaintiff's initial disclosures [RFP 26];
- individuals identified in response to defendants' interrogatories [RFP 28]; and
- documents and communications concerning the subject matter of this litigation, including notes, summaries, affidavits, declarations, recordings, or notes of meetings [RFP 31].

Purports to defer his obligation to produce responsive documents pending a meet and confer to "narrow" the request, but he has offered virtually no meaningful engagement, over more than five hours of meet and confer calls, as to the clarification or narrowing he seeks. Defendants remain without responsive materials.

Defendants move to compel production of all nonprivileged materials in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control responsive to RFPs 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 19, 26, 28, and 31.

Plaintiff's responses represent improper burden-shifting.

RFPs 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 19, 26, 28, and 31 indisputably relate to "matter[s] that may be inquired into under Rule 26(b)"—plaintiff contends that his hours fell as a result of actions by defendants, including during the period in which he was on leave, and contends that he "continues to suffer harm and substantial economic loss" as a result of acts of defendants, and defendants are entitled to production of nonprivileged documents, like witness statements, obtained in connection with the litigation from nonparties—and are proper under Rule 34. Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(a).

Issue 4:	
Failure to Produce Promised Documents Despite Entry of a Pr	rotective Order

- 1, 4, 12
- Seek documents relating to
- plaintiff's "claim that defendants discriminated against [and] retaliated against" him [RFP 1];
- communications between plaintiff and present or former agents or employees of DPW [RFP 4];
- income or income substitutes from any source, including but not limited to tax forms and returns, pay stubs, benefits booklets, and other records [RFP 12].

Promised to "produce non-privileged documents responsive to this Request" (and unredacted versions of documents produced with redactions) following entry of a protective order. ECF 85-7 (e.g., R&Os to RFPs 1, 4 (promising production "subject to the subsequent entering of a protective order"); see also R&O to RFP 12 and General Objection 14; ECF 85-16 at 8–9.

Such an order has now been entered, ECF 89, but at a Court conference on November 4, 2020, plaintiff represented, contrary to prior representations, that he intended to make no further production. Nov. 4, 2020 Tr. at 25. See ECF 85-2 at 8 (requesting clarification as to when Mr. Cardwell would produce "the unproduced responsive documents [he] promised to send in [his] August 6th letter").

Defendants move to compel production of all nonprivileged materials in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control responsive to RFPs 1, 4, and 12.

Plaintiff promised to produce the materials upon entry of a protective order, thereby conceding that they are responsive, and should now do so.

	Issue 5: Technical Deficiencies and Incompleteness		
All			
	In particular, plaintiff has:	Defendants move to compel:	
	<ul> <li>Produced documents and communications in non-native form without metadata (like date, time, sender, and recipient)<sup>5</sup> and asserted that defendants have waived the right to seek such information, see Nov. 4, 2020 Tr. at 30.</li> <li>Produced certain documents only in part or with errors that obscure text.</li> </ul>	• Prompt re-production of all previously-produced materials, cured of the deficiencies set forth at left (in a form consistent with the requirements of Rule 34,6 and containing, at minimum, information sufficient to enable a computerized review database or platform to identify all sender(s), recipient(s), email addresses, dates, and times).	
	• Failed to produce all responsive information in his possession, custody, or control. For example, plaintiff failed to produce to defendants the email chain he appended to his Second Amended Complaint as Exhibit 18.	<ul> <li>Prompt production of all responsive, nonprivileged information in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control, including without limitation</li> </ul>	
	• Failed to produce full document families, including from personal email accounts. <sup>7</sup>	portions of documents previously produced.	
	• Produced only selective screenshots of responsive text- and social media message chains.		
	• Failed to produce communications from platforms he directed <sup>8</sup> his contacts to use, including Signal. <sup>9</sup>		
	Produced virtually no audio files, despite the fact that his complaint purports to quote from a number of oral communications.	• Production of all responsive, nonprivileged audio files in plaintiff's possession, custody, or control.	
		[Cont>]	

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See, e.g., ECF 85-2 at 7–8 (Sept. 29, 2020 Joint Letter, Def. Ex. 1).

See Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(b)(2)(E)(ii); Defendants' First Set of Requests for Production, Instruction 11 ("Documents produced in response to these requests should be provided in the same form in which they are kept, and . . . [e]lectronically stored information, as that term is defined in Fed. R. Civ. P. 34, should be produced in electronic form.").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See, e.g., ECF 85-2 at 7.

<sup>8</sup> See email produced as CARDWELL000675.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See ECF 85-2 at 6.

- Failed to produce communications with the vast Production of all responsive, majority of the individuals identified, in plaintiff's nonprivileged communications response to Interrogatory No. 11, as persons to or from with the referenced individuals in whom plaintiff has "sent or received communications plaintiff's possession, custody, or concerning the subject matter of this litigation," and control. has produced no communications with various of the individuals he identifies by name in response to various Interrogatories. (Plaintiff's response to Interrogatory No. 11 "incorporate[d] by reference the individuals identified in his Initial and Amended Initial Disclosures served on January 20, 2020 and January 21, 2020, as well as his Second Amended Initial Disclosures served on August 17, 2020." See R&O to Rog 11; accord ECF 85-2 at 6 (stating that "in responding to Interrogatory No. 11 . . . plaintiff has incorporated by reference . . . 'the individuals identified in his ... Second Amended Initial Disclosures."). Declined to respond to the question whether he has A response to the question set "searched for and produced responsive forth at left. communications" with the individuals referenced in his responses to defendants' written discovery. ECF 85-2 at 7. An accurate and complete privilege log.
  - 2. Plaintiff Should Also Be Ordered to Provide Particularized Responses and Objections to Defendants' RFPs

To the extent plaintiff does not produce the information and documents requested based on his objections, defendants also submit that he should be required to provide more particularized responses and objections to defendants' RFPs. ECF 60.

Plaintiff was ordered to "provide complete responses to all pending discovery requests no later than July 18, 2020." ECF 60. Defendants raised plaintiff's failures promptly, via three meet and confer calls in August 2020. ECF 85-1 at 2. Plaintiff purported to amend his responses and objections twice, each time without regard—despite defendants' exhortations—for Rule 34. *Four months* to the day after plaintiff was ordered to provide complete responses, defendants remain without such responses or responsive documents to which they are entitled.

Should the plaintiff not produce all responsive material in plaintiff's possession outright, defendants are entitled to "full[]" and particularized responses and objections to their RFPs sufficient to enable defendants to discern the particularized bases on which plaintiff is withholding responsive information, determine the scale or scope of withholding and, if necessary, prepare a further specific motion to compel production.

#### C. Defendants Move To Compel Return of Firm Confidential Material Retained by Plaintiff

Plaintiff has retained material belonging to Davis Polk, including multiple hardcopy notebooks, emails, photographs of computer systems, and otherwise, some in both original and reproduced format ("Firm Material"). Despite the requirement that he return all such material on his departure from the Firm, and despite promising through counsel in August 2020 that he would return the materials, ECF 85-7 (R&O to RFP 18), plaintiff has failed to do so, and represented at the November 4, 2020 court conference that he intends to make no further productions. Nov. 4, 2020 Tr. at 25. In November 2020, plaintiff placed certain Firm Material on the public docket without notice or redaction. ECF 87, 88.

Defendants move for an order compelling the prompt return of all Firm Material, which the Firm will then review for potential production, with appropriate designations, in response to plaintiff's discovery requests. 10

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Defendants respectfully request that plaintiff be directed to return all Firm Material removed from the Firm in any form—including, without limitation, originals, all copies, and emails exported to or mirrored in plaintiff's Gmail account—to the Firm within one week of any order of the Court, including without limitation to prevent improper publication of client confidences or material reflecting privileged representations.

For the avoidance of doubt, the fact that Mr. Cardwell exported Firm email or other documents to his personal email account or files does not mean, as Mr. Cardwell asserted in a written communication to defendants, that he now "owns" the material.

#### **CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set forth above, defendants respectfully request that the Court issue an order compelling discovery from plaintiff as set forth above.

Dated: November 18, 2020 New York, New York

Respectfully Submitted,

PAUL, WEISS, RIFKIND, WHARTON & GARRISON LLP

By: /s/ Bruce Birenboim

Bruce Birenboim Susanna M. Buergel Jeh C. Johnson Marissa C.M. Doran

1285 Avenue of the Americas New York, New York 10019-6064 Telephone: (212) 373-3784 bbirenboim@paulweiss.com sbuergel@paulweiss.com jjohnson@paulweiss.com mdoran@paulweiss.com Attorneys for Defendants

## **RULE 37 CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the parties attempted to resolve this dispute over three meet and confer calls spanning more than five hours, dated August 4, August 6, and August 20, 2020.

By: /s/ Bruce Birenboim

Bruce Birenboim